

System Configuration Team (SCT)

Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26 Meeting Notes February 20, 2003

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The February 20, 2003 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees for the meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B. Hevlin read a round of introductions, a review of the agenda and the notes from the latest SCT meeting.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

The Corps' Mike Mason noted that he is retiring this Friday, so this will be his last SCT meeting; he introduced Dana Knutsen, who will be replacing him, at least temporarily, as COE Walla Walla District Representative. Hevlin thanked Mason for his years of service and invaluable input to the SCT process.

2. The Dalles Spillway Wall Progress Update.

The Corps' Mike Langsley described the current status of the spillway wall construction project at The Dalles, saying that, overall, the project is going well. The next checkpoint is the spring balloon tag test, he said; we'll be looking at a range of spill volumes from 8 Kcfs to 21 Kcfs per bay. That next test is our next go/no-go decision, he said. So you're looking for good survivals? Hevlin asked. We need to find out at what spill per bay we have good survival, and at what volume survival starts to fall off, Rock Peters replied. We also need to find out where the break point is for optimal adult passage, as well as for good tailrace egress conditions, said Langsley.

The bottom line is that we have seen high rates of delayed mortality in juveniles that pass at the south end of the spillway and get entrained in the lateral flow there, said Langsley; that is obviously reflected in the total project mortality numbers at The Dalles, and we think this project

will help reduce that mortality. Fish passing the north end of the spillway encounter more training wall-like conditions and survive at a much higher rate, he said.

What is the cost of the wall? Hevlin asked. About \$10 million, replied Norm Tolonen. So the go/no-go decision is on the additional CFD modeling, and the spring balloon-tag test? Ron Boyce asked. Correct, Langsley replied. And what are the criteria the Corps will use to make that decision? Boyce asked. That hasn't yet been established. Langsley replied.

So the decision you want from us today is to recommend that you go forward with plans and specs, but the actual contract wouldn't be awarded until July? Hevlin asked. Correct, Langsley replied. And when would the spill test take place? Ken Barnhart asked. May or June, Langsley replied. Does the SCT support this proposal? Forester asked. No SCT opposition was raised to this project at today's meeting. And the go/no-go decision will be made when? Forester asked. Probably at the SCT's June or July meeting, was the reply.

3. FFDRWG Update.

A. B2 Corner Collector. John Kranda said this project is going well and should be finished ahead of schedule, in time for use during the 2004 passage season. The project is also within budget, he added.

B. The Dalles Adult Channel Improvements. Tolonen said this project is now nearly complete, and has gone very well.

C. John Day Ladder Improvements. This project is now essentially complete as well and the will be operational in time for the 2003 passage season, said Kranda.

D. SBC/SWI Removal at Lower Granite. Mason reported that the contract for this project was awarded January 31. The contractor started work on February 17; the work is going extremely well, and all of the components will be removed by March 1. The contractor is working at least two shifts per day, Mason said.

At our last meeting, we asked Walla Walla FFDRWG to develop a low-flow study proposal, Hevlin said; they have now done so, and NMFS supports the plan that was developed. Unless the Lower Granite water supply forecast falls below 13 MAF, the test will go forward.

With respect to the study plan, Tim Wick said it now appears that flows will be low enough to trigger maximum transport at the Lower Snake collector projects; that means the most likely scenario is an 18-day test. He went briefly through the anticipated test pattern; two days of 12-hour BiOp spill followed by two days of 24-hour RSW operation with 8 Kcfs-12 Kcfs of training spill. We've increased the number of radio-tagged fish to be released to 1,300 chinook and 400 steelhead above the dam and 400 chinook below the dam. We've also doubled the number of hydrophones, he added.

Which forecast will you use to make the determination on the test duration? Steve Pettit asked. The March final, Steve Rainey replied. Boyce said that, to him, it makes more sense to

wait until May to see what flows will actually materialize at Lower Granite. In response to a question from Pettit, Wick said no further meetings on the test protocols have been scheduled at this time. There will be a need for close coordination between the Corps and FPAC on the timing of this test to avoid putting a significant percentage of the migration into Little Goose pool under poor migratory conditions, Pettit observed. No problem, Wick replied. So the final proposal will go out for comment? Forester asked. Correct, was the reply.

E. Lower Monumental Spillway Repairs. Mason said the Lower Monumental spillway repairs are now complete; the project is ready to spill in 2003, if spill occurs.

F. Progress of the Committees Working On Multi-Year Passage Improvement Planning for The Dalles, John Day, McNary and the Lower Snake Projects. These committees have now been established, said Peters; a meeting has been set for March 6-7 at The Dalles, essentially a brainstorming session to get all of the ideas for The Dalles out on the table. A similar meeting has been set for tomorrow (February 21) in Walla Walla, said Rainey. Rebecca Kalamasz said tomorrow's meeting will focus on configuration options for all of the Walla Walla District projects. And what's the time-frame for the development of the draft Walla Walla District plan? Hevlin asked. We should be able to give you some input at the March SCT meeting, Kalamasz replied.

4. SRWG Update.

The focus of this agenda item was studies which may need to be modified or deferred due to the forecast low water year. Peters said he had sent out an email yesterday announcing a meeting on this issue next Friday, March 7. We'll be basing that discussion on BPA's weekly flow forecasts; because those are the best forecasts available, currently, he said; we need to talk about the fact that we're likely going to have to make some hard decisions. The projects we've identified as potentially problematic given the low water year include the Bonneville juvenile work, Bonneville adult fallback, and the summer work at John Day. It would be helpful if you could give us some specifics about the thresholds under which the tests may be curtailed, Boyce said.

What about Walla Walla District? Hevlin asked. Basically the types of studies that would be affected are those that rely on certain spill conditions, including the Lower Granite RSW study, project survival at Ice Harbor, and the work at McNary, Kalamasz replied. There is also a question about whether we want to study kelt transport in a low-flow year, she added. Is there a meeting at which the Walla Walla District studies will be discussed? Boyce asked. We could put together a conference call to discuss the transport study and the kelt study, Kalamasz replied. That would probably be a good idea, Hevlin said.

5. FY'03 CRFM Program

Kranda distributed the most recent version of the FY'03 CRFM measures worksheet, dated February 20 (Enclosure C). He said the final FY'03 appropriation was \$85 million; with savings and slippage; we'll likely have a work allowance of \$70 million initially. We'll be

scrambling right out of the gate to get savings and slippage restored, he said; by the end of February, we'll already have spent virtually the entire Portland District share of that appropriation. We'll be out of continuing resolution today, he said; it will likely be another couple of weeks before the money actually arrives.

Kranda noted that there are a few changes to the current version of the FY'03 spreadsheet; these revisions are highlighted in grey. He spent a few minutes going through the new figures, all reductions in the initial cost estimates. The total cost of the FY'03 program (including the add-on items at the bottom of the spreadsheet) is now \$85.95 million. To me, said Kranda, that's close enough to the final appropriation amount that there is no need for us to talk about any further cuts at this time; our direction from Corps upper management is that we should continue to "lean forward," and they will find us the money we need, Kranda said.

The group offered a variety of clarifying questions and comments, to which Kranda responded. Mason added that the Chief Joseph flow deflector project was authorized in the FY'03 budget. That \$500,000 appropriation will be separate from CRFM, and used for plans and specs this year; the total cost of the project is expected to be in the \$20 million range. David Wills noted that the Chief Joseph flow deflector project is the only new start for the Corps in the entire country this year.

6. FY'04 CRFM Program.

Kranda said he doesn't have an FY'04 spreadsheet yet, but should have one in time for the March SCT meeting. The president's request for FY'04 is \$95 million, and the current preliminary estimate of the total cost of the FY'04 CRFM budget is \$90 million, but a lot will change, Kranda said. If we decide to proceed with Ice Harbor RSW and The Dalles spillway wall, the FY'04 program could get significantly more expensive, Kranda said; the tail of the Bonneville corner collector is another major FY'04 construction item. Also, he said, we will likely see some high-cost research work at Bonneville, The Dalles, the estuary and for delayed mortality in FY'04. Remember also that we're in a configuration decision process at John Day, he said; it's possible that we may want to start screen construction at that project next year. And when will the decision on Ice Harbor RSW construction be made? Boyce asked. October, once the data from the 2003 RSW test at Lower Granite has been analyzed, Hevlin replied.

7. Next SCT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for March 20. The April meeting was scheduled for April 17, but may be canceled. The May meeting was set for May 22. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.